



**File Code:** 1950; 2800; 1560

**Date:** August 5, 2020

Dear Interested Party:

This project announcement letter serves to initiate scoping, “an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed” (40 CFR 1501.7). I request your input on the following proposed action regarding the 2020 Quartz Nominations Project.

**Proposed Action**

The Forest Service proposes to allow quartz exploration and mining operations on 10 tracts of land consisting of 330 acres in the following locations of Montgomery County, Arkansas:

Tract ID	Acres	Township	Range	Sections
OQC-283P	80	T2S	R25W	Section 29 Section 30
OQC-286R	10	T3S	R25W	Section 12
OQC-290P	80	T3S	R24W	Section 4 Section 9
OQC-291P	20	T3S	R24W	Section 9
OQC-296P	35	T3S	R24W	Section 19
OQC-297P	40	T3S	R24W	Section 3 Section 10
OQC-298R	10	T3S	R24W	Section 3 Section 10
OQC-299R	10	T3S	R24W	Section 3 Section 10
OQC-300	30	T2S	R25W	Section 11 Section 14
OQC-301	15	T2S	R25W	Section 8 Section 9

Timber impacted by mining operations would be sold using the most appropriate method of disposal. Reclamation would include topsoil reapplication, recontouring of the surrounding terrain, fertilizing and revegetating with site-specific seed mixture, and replanting with seedlings until adequately stocked. Access would be provided using a combination of existing National Forest System (NFS) roads and approximately 3 miles of roads not in the NFS that will be added. (see enclosed map with approximate locations).

### **Purpose of the Action**

Overall guidance for the proposed project is found in the 2005 Revised Land and Resource Management Plan (Revised Forest Plan) for the Ouachita National Forest. The purpose of this action is to allow the extraction of quartz as required by 36 CFR 228C and FSM 2850 Supplement: R8-2800-2002-2. According to the Mining and Minerals Policy Act of 1970, it is the continuing policy of the federal government to foster and encourage private enterprises in the exploration, development and production of mineral and energy resources.

### **Need for the Action**

The nomination fees for 10 separate tracts has been submitted to the Caddo-Womble Ranger District, and the Forest Service must now determine whether quartz explorations and mining should be completed on these tracts.

### **Invitation to Participate in Project Planning**

Scoping is not limited to a single point in time; we will continue to accept and consider comments until an implementation decision is made. With that said, your comments will be most helpful if they are received early in the process. They will help us identify environmental issues associated with implementation, and alternative ways to meet Forest plan objectives and desired conditions. Your involvement will enable us to better assess concerns of the public.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will become a part of the public record for this proposed action. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, anonymous comments will not provide the Agency with the ability to provide the respondent with subsequent environmental documents.

### **Objection Process**

This project is subject to subparts A and B of *36 CFR Part 218 Project-Level Predecisional Administrative Review Process* (objection process); it is not authorized under the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA).

The designated opportunity for public comment in response to this solicitation is **August 7, 2020 to September 7, 2020**. Providing specific written comments during this time will afford you standing to later file an objection to the project, should you desire (see Upcoming Project Planning Steps).

Pursuant to §218.2, specific written comments should be within the scope of the proposed action, have a direct relationship to the proposed action, and must include supporting reasons for the responsible official to consider.

**How to Comment**

Specific written comments must be submitted to: Ichiro Stewart, Acting District Ranger, 1523 Hwy 270 E, Mt. Ida AR 71957 or fax to 870-867-3338. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are: 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Send electronic comments, in a common digital format, to [comments-southern-ouachita-caddo-womble@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-southern-ouachita-caddo-womble@fs.fed.us). Please state "2020 Quartz Nominations Project" in the subject line when providing electronic comments, or on the envelope when replying by mail.

**Upcoming Project Planning Steps**

As stated above, your comments will help us identify issues and they will be used to formulate alternatives to this proposal. An environmental analysis will be conducted and the results will be documented in an environmental assessment (EA).

Upon completion, the EA will be released for public review and comment. A 30-day notice and comment period pursuant to 36 CFR 218 will be initiated. This comment period will afford you another opportunity to obtain standing to later file an objection to the project, should you desire.

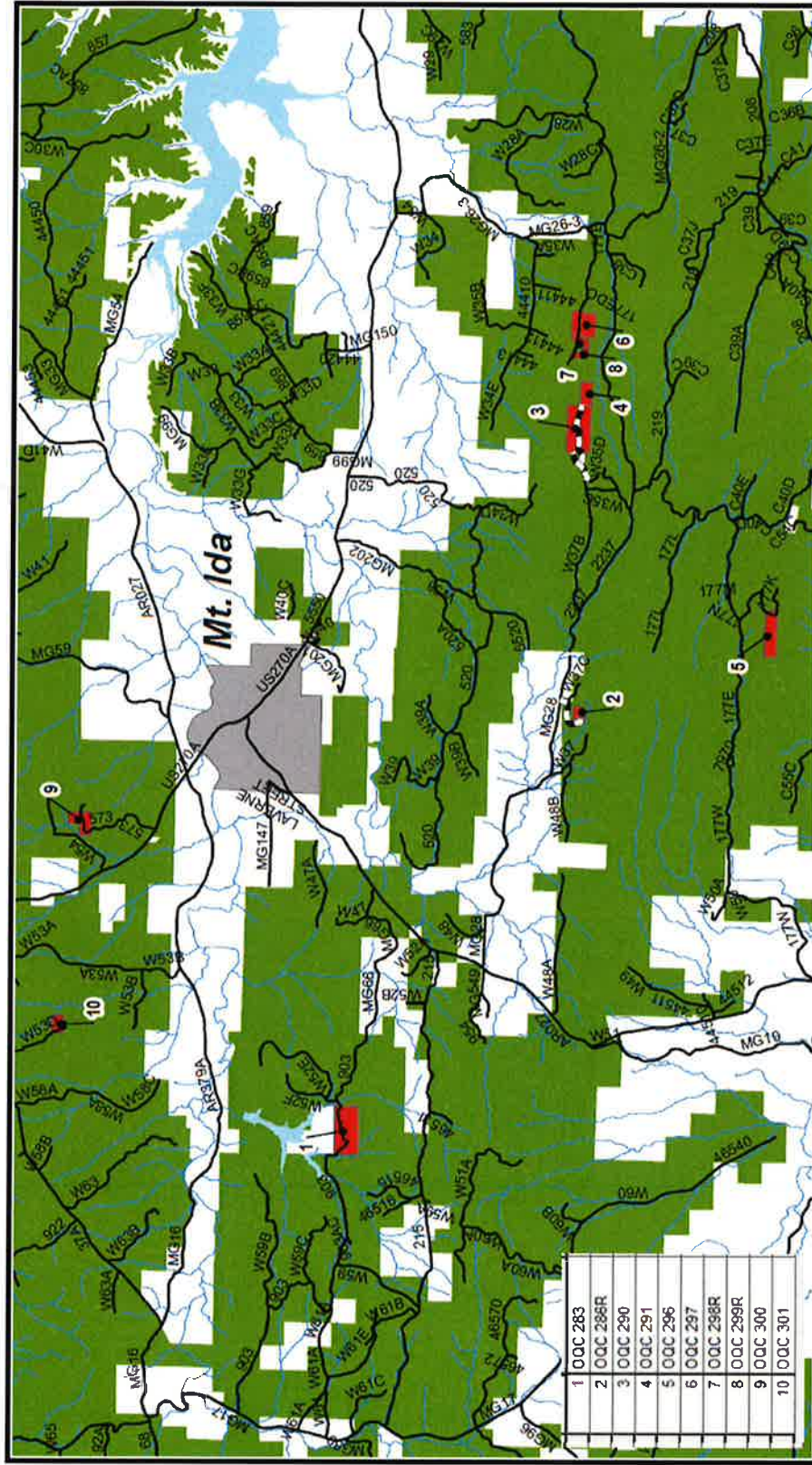
An objection period, if required, will follow the regulation found in §218.7. Issues raised in objections must be based on previously submitted specific written comments regarding the project and attributed to the objector, unless the issue is based on new information that arose after a designated opportunity to comment (§218.8(c)). If you have questions about this project or would like more information, please contact Andrew McCormick at 501-321-5285 or [andrewtmccormick@fs.fed.us](mailto:andrewtmccormick@fs.fed.us).

Sincerely,



ICHIRO B. STEWART  
Acting District Ranger

Enclosure



**Vicinity Map**

Sheet 1 of 1

**Legend**

- Existing Roads
- New Access
- Cities
- 2020 Quartz Nominations
- Streams
- USDA FOREST SERVICE

Map Creation Date - 8/5/2020  
Map Revision Date -

0 0.75 1.5 3 Miles

**2020 Quartz Nominations**

Caddo-Womble Ranger District

Montgomery County, Arkansas

U.S. Forest Service - R8  
Ouachita National Forest

For more information, contact the Womble Ranger District at 1523 Hwy 270 E  
Mt. Ida, AR or phone (870) 867-2101

